Review of PDS

*73. SHRI R. P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any review has been made recently to plug the loopholes in the operation of the Public Distribution System (PDS) for supply of wheat and rice to the targeted BPL card holders;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and

(c) the fresh measures being taken to strengthen the PDS and also to extend it to the poorest blocks in the country?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR):(a) and (b) The Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is reviewed regularly at various levels, both in the Central Government and the State Governments. These reviews are done with the objective to strengthen the system and to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness so that the targeted Below Poverty Line (BPL) card holders are able to get the supply of wheat and rice as envisaged under the Scheme. As a result of these reviews, problems relating to identification of targeted BPL families, variation in off-take of foodgrains, availability of stocks, operations of the fair price shops, etc are monitored and remedial steps taken.

(c) In order to further strengthen the PDS and to make wheat and rice available to the poorest of the poor families, it is proposed to expand the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) by including another 50 lakh families who are at the risk of hunger. Instructions have been recently issued to the State Government/UT admns. that all eligible AAY families, who are not presently included in the BPL list, may be issued AAY Cards and simultaneously included in the BPL list. In respect of urban destitutes also, States/UTs have been recently asked to ensure that no bonafide Indian citizens including homeless are denied the facility of the TPDS. The State Governments have also been requested to address themselves to the problems being faced by the targeted families so as to make the system more efficient and effective.